

Good evening. My name is Katelyn Slowik from the Killingly Agriscience Center at Killingly High School. I live in Plainfield, CT and I am a senior in the program.

Though I did not grow up in a family that was very involved in it, agriculture has become a major part of my life. My involvement with the agricultural education program has introduced me to the benefits of agriculture, and the importance of it in our everyday lives. Through my Animal Science classes I have learned how to care for and raise both livestock and smaller animals. I have grown to love caring for the lives of animals, particularly of horses and cows. My Supervised Agricultural Experience program is raising dairy goats. I have learned business and marketing skills which will be beneficial to me in the future. I am also currently working at a horse stable, gaining experience that will provide me with a head start in the career field that I intend to pursue after high school.

So many people take agriculture for granted. I know this, because I was one of those people before agricultural education opened my eyes to the true importance of agriculture in our world. Without agriculture, we would not be able to care for our people. We would not be able to provide them with food, clothing, or a large amount of other things that have become necessities in daily living.

Also, without agriculture, I would not have discovered a career that suited my own personal interests. Since I was in second grade, I was set on the idea that I wanted to be a veterinarian. An occupation as a veterinarian would have been great, however, I was never in love with the idea of it. Though pursuing a career in veterinary medicine felt almost natural to me, I lacked the passion needed to be successful in this career. Lucky for me, through experiences in the FFA and my Animal Science classes, I discovered that passion in equine massage therapy, a career that I can't wait to start learning more about. It is such a relief to wake up in the morning knowing exactly what my goals are, as well as knowing that I have been provided with educational opportunities that have made achieving these goals possible. I plan on

remaining very involved with the FFA, even after I graduate. I would like to be a part of our Chapter's Alumni, and continue to raise awareness about the importance of agriculture in the lives of our people. Agriculture has become very dear to me, and I cannot put into words how much I look forward to pursuing my career goals.

I am asking you to please increase funding for agriscience programs by adopting the ECS Task Force School Choice Funding recommendation into the Governor's Proposed Budget.